591 longer time--a situation that has brought many difficulties for everyone involved.

162 Wars have contributed to the predominance of the female population. While in 1938 there were 1047 females for every 1000 males, in 1944 the figure had risen to 1092. There were about 30,000 or 8-9 per thousand new marriages in 1939, but immediately after the war the figure rose to 50,000 or 11-13 per thousand a year. Now it is approximately on the pre-war level; in 1951 32,143 new marriages (7.9 per thou-

● 582 [364] sand) took place. The severe housing shortage and difficult economic conditions have greatly contributed to a rise in the average age for marriage. Today it is around twenty-five, somewhat more for men and somewhat less for women, while the legal age is eighteen for men and seventeen for women.

795 771 Finland officially adopted the Lutheran creed. The bishops and ministers worked energetically for the uprooting of the pagan beliefs and succeeded in extinguishing the old poetry (which was supposed to have been inspired by the devil) 212 795 in the western parts of the country. The Lutheran Church attached much importance to the instruction of the people and it deserves credit [582] for effectively teaching the Finns to read. The ability to read and to write and a knowledge of the fundamental doctrines of the Church were made prerequisite for anyone wishing to enter matrimony, and slow readers were punished by being placed in stocks before the church on Sundays. Thus, in the western parts of the country, literacy was already quite common towards the end of the seventeenth century.

795 Even today the Lutheran Church holds by far